

FULL COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2017

Written question from Ian McKie to Councillor Ian Ward, Executive Member for Transport and Infrastructure (including car parking)

In July 2016 I asked a [question](#) of the then Council Leader about the appropriateness of the involvement of representatives of the MP's office in the work of the Transport Infrastructure Taskforce (particularly in its deliberations relating to cross-Solent travel) in light of an email exchange between the Council and a representative of the MP's office in which the latter suggested working with Red Funnel to ensure they were acting in a visibly different manner to Wightlink, before suggesting that "a loss of business from Wightlink to Red Funnel would be the most damaging outcome for Wightlink".

Cllr Bacon failed to provide a meaningful response to this question, and I am therefore re-directing it to you as the new relevant Executive Member (subject to you being confident that there is no conflict on this issue between your Executive position and that as Chairman of the Isle of Wight Conservative Association, and your interface with the MP's office in the latter capacity).

You stated at a recent meeting of the Executive that you will be meeting the Taskforce's Chairman, Christopher Garnett, in the near future – and you also noted that "really interesting items" are coming out of the Taskforce's work.

In light of this, please can you advise whether you are prepared to use your Executive role – particularly in your forthcoming discussions with Mr Garnett – to ensure that those individuals from the MP's office who advocated improper interference in the cross-Solent ferry market are not given the opportunity to provide any form of input and involvement in the Taskforce's work, in order to ensure there is public confidence amongst key stakeholders that a fair and balanced approach is being taken?

Response

As Executive member for Transport and Infrastructure I fully support the work that the Infrastructure Task Force are undertaking to seek out and collate the views of all stakeholders and discuss with the government the infrastructure needs of the Island and it is important that interested groups, agencies and individuals are provided the opportunity to provide the task force with their views. The Task Force will assess the information that it has collated to provide the council with an Independent view on what investment in infrastructure can support economic growth on the Island. It will then be for the council to take a view on that report and decide what action it will take as a result of the recommendations made to it.